



July 15, 2008

Marine Life Protection Act Initiative  
c/o California Resources Agency  
1416 Ninth Street, Suite 1311  
Sacramento, CA 95814  
Attention: Melissa Miller-Henson  
Email: [MLPAComments@resources.ca.gov](mailto:MLPAComments@resources.ca.gov)

RE: Nomination of Tom Ford, Executive Director Santa Monica Baykeeper for South Coast Regional Stakeholder Group

Dear Ms. Miller-Henson:

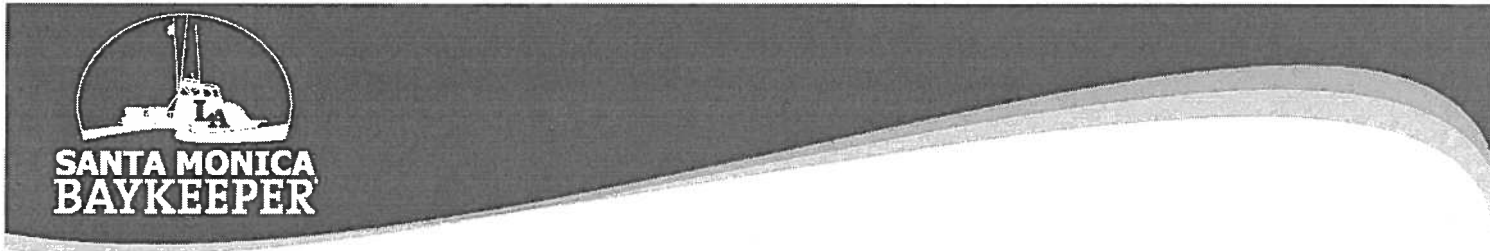
Having reviewed the criteria and consulted with participants in the Marine Life Protection Act Initiative (MLPAI) from the Central and North Central Region (including some RSG members) and conferred with fellow professionals in southern California, I am confident that I will be an asset to the South Coast Regional Stakeholder Group. My experience and education has prepared me well to serve the diverse interests and resources encompassed by the MLPAI.

Since relocating from New England to Los Angeles in 1998 I have been employed as an educator, ecologist, and Project Director. Employed by UCLA as the Curator of the Ocean Discovery Center I was charged with displaying the native species of Santa Monica Bay to the public and school children that visited our Aquarium. Interpretation of the ecology and physical structure of Santa Monica Bay was a central theme in our curriculum that was adapted to educate the general public, school programs (kindergarten through 12<sup>th</sup> grade), and train volunteers.

In 2002, I took a job as the Kelp Project Biologist for the Santa Monica Baykeeper. The purpose of the Santa Monica Baykeeper Kelp Project is to monitor and restore the giant kelp forests off Palos Verdes and Malibu. The Kelp Project had regional partners from San Diego to Santa Barbara, through my fellow Waterkeeper Programs in southern California. Support for our project came predominantly from the Community Restoration Program at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and through the California Coastal Conservancy. Each node of the Kelp Project, San Diego, Orange County, Los Angeles and Santa Barbara had different challenges to face in the implementation of the project, differing ocean states, baseline condition of the rocky reefs and extant kelp forest communities. The interaction of this group of Marine Biologists has enabled me to explore the kelp forests of the Southern California Bight in their entirety. I earned my Master's degree from UCLA focusing on global macro-algal community dynamics. Since 2002 I have made over 600 dives and spent more than 2,000 hours on Santa Monica Bay and a few research dive trips out to Santa Barbara, Santa Catalina, Anacapa and Santa Cruz islands, with the Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary Staff and others.

The Kelp Project for the Santa Monica Baykeeper now employs three marine ecologists who are performing Cooperative Resource Assessment of Near Shore Ecosystems (CRANE) surveys along the coastline of Los Angeles





County with the Vantuna Research Group from Occidental College; support for these efforts are provided by the Santa Monica Bay Restoration Commission. We continue to work with volunteer divers throughout Los Angeles to restore the kelp forests while we generate data with our professional ecologists to inform the MLPAI. In the coming months we will initiate aerial surveys of the Southern California Coast adapted from the program at the Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary to better understand the extent, type, and distribution of fishers in the State Waters of the Southern California Bight.

While at the University of Rhode Island (URI) I worked as a commercial shell fisherman, SCUBA diving for clams in Narragansett Bay. I also baited lobster pots and worked as a deck hand on lobster boats from time to time. At URI I studied sea turtle biology which led to employment aboard ocean going dredges in the Carolinas, Georgia and Florida. Working for National Marine Fisheries Service, the Georgia Department of Natural Resources and Little Cumberland Island Wildlife Refuge I spent two years studying the interaction of sea turtles with these commercial endeavors. The results of this work led to adaptive management strategies that both allowed for these commercial activities to continue while providing better protection for the sea turtles. These diverse experiences, locations and relationships have allowed me to develop a comprehensive view of our coastal ocean resources and their users.

As an ecologist, surfer, sailor, SCUBA diver, and fisherman, I bring a broad perspective to the management and use of our ocean. The experiences and understanding that my background affords enables me to effectively communicate, respect, and comprehend the many viewpoints which will be represented on the South Coast Regional Working Group and other committees within the greater MLPAI. I sit on a number of boards and committees which are engaged in the consideration of public policy and resource management. The membership of these committees and boards encompass representatives with differing interests and goals. Patience and careful consideration of alternative views is central to the success of the workings of these bodies.

I currently am: the President of the Board of the California Coastkeeper Alliance, Vice Chair of the Santa Monica Bay Restoration Commission Governing Board and Executive Committee, Environmental Representative for the Los Angeles Long Beach Harbor Safety Committee, member of the International Support Committee for the Waterkeeper Alliance, and President of the Southern California Ocean Restoration Divers.

Established in 1993 the Santa Monica Baykeeper's mission is to protect and restore the Santa Monica Bay, San Pedro Bay and adjacent waters through enforcement, fieldwork, and community action. Over the past 15 years we have established numerous relationships within Los Angeles County. We have frequently presented to the great majority of dive clubs in our area and know the dive shop operators. Our Kelp Project has fostered relationships with the California Sea Urchin Commission and engaged the entire Los Angeles Unified School District with our "California Kelp Forest Restoration" poster and curriculum. A participant with the Garibaldi Group we interact with 15 educational and environmental organizations that represent constituencies from Monterey Bay to San Diego. The California Coastkeeper Alliance is comprised of 12 sister organizations nearly covering the entire coastline of California and many inland areas. The Waterkeeper Alliance has over 180 sister organizations globally. The Santa Monica Bay Restoration Commission involves over 35 cities, agencies, municipalities, environmental groups, State and Federal Officials, business community, and other groups with the purpose to



monitor, assess, coordinate and advise the activities of state programs and oversee the funding that affects beneficial uses, restoration and enhancement of Santa Monica Bay and its Watersheds.

Thank you for considering me as a candidate for the South Coast Regional Stakeholder Group. I hope this letter conveys my deep personal and professional commitment to the sustainable management and use of southern California's ocean resources. Since the start of the Northern Channel Islands process I have been involved with the Marine Life Protection Act organizing community members and working with scientists and stakeholders. Through the California Coastkeeper Alliance I am already communicating with interested organizations along the North Coast. I am aware of the commitment expected of the members of the SCRSG and prepared to spend the necessary time and energy to dutifully fulfill any responsibilities that may be awarded me. I believe I would be an asset to this process and welcome any questions that arise from your review of this letter.

Sincerely,

Tom Ford  
Executive Director



PO Box 3156, Fremont, CA 94539  
(510) 770 9764 [www.cacoastkeeper.org](http://www.cacoastkeeper.org)

July 18, 2008

Marine Life Protection Act Initiative  
c/o California Resources Agency  
1416 Ninth Street, Suite 1311  
Sacramento, CA 95814  
Attention: Melissa Miller-Henson  
Via Email: [MLPAComments@resources.ca.gov](mailto:MLPAComments@resources.ca.gov)

Re: Support for Southern California Regional Stakeholder Group Candidates

Dear Ms. Miller-Henson:

On behalf of California Coastkeeper Alliance, I am pleased to submit this letter in support of several well-qualified candidates who have been nominated to the Southern California Regional Stakeholder Group. California Coastkeeper Alliance (CCKA) advocates statewide for clean water and a healthy ocean on behalf of itself and California's 12 Waterkeeper organizations spanning the coast from the Oregon border to San Diego. The true bottom-up nature of the Waterkeeper model is unique in California; each of our 12 member groups are autonomous, locally based, individual non-profit organizations that work to protect the health of the waters within their local communities. As such, each Waterkeeper can offer a unique voice and local expertise to the Regional Stakeholder Group.

Under the MLPA framework, the Regional Stakeholder Group (RSG) is the primary entity responsible for initiating proposals for protected area networks. It is imperative that the composition of the RSG reflect that a large majority of Californians support the creation of more marine protected areas, including marine reserves, and that the oceans are a public asset, held in trust for future generations. The daily work of the Waterkeepers is focused on their local watersheds with an emphasis on community outreach and working collaboratively with various stakeholders. This expertise makes each of the four candidates listed below well-suited for the RSG. Moreover, these candidates have first hand knowledge of the marine resources in their geographic area and have a unique perspective to contribute to the creation of marine protected areas. Our top endorsements (in alphabetical order) are:

**Tom Ford, Baykeeper & Executive Director, Santa Monica Baykeeper**

Mr. Ford's background in ocean issues, education and work experience spans both the Atlantic and Pacific coasts. Mr. Ford was educated as a biologist and marine ecologist at the University of Rhode Island and UCLA. He previously worked as a commercial shell fisherman in Rhode Island, digging clams from Narragansett Bay. He also worked as a biological observer aboard dredges and shrimp boats in Georgia and the Carolinas for the National Marine Fisheries Service and Georgia Department of Natural Resources. Since 1998, Mr. Ford has directed the Santa Monica Baykeeper Kelp Restoration Project, which was part of CCKA's Giant Kelp Restoration Project that spanned Southern California from Santa Barbara to San Diego and included the other Southern California Waterkeepers. Currently Mr. Ford is the Executive Director of the Santa Monica Baykeeper and the President of the Board of CCKA. He serves as a Vice Chair of the Santa Monica Bay Restoration Commission Governing Board and as an environmental representative on the Los Angeles Long Beach Harbor

Safety Committee. Mr. Ford's knowledge of the kelp forests off Southern California is supported by his studies and his more than 2000 hours on the ocean and over 600 dives in southern California in the past ten years.

**Kate Hanley, *Director of Operations and Marine Conservation Director, San Diego Coastkeeper***

Ms. Hanley has been the lead for San Diego Coastkeeper for the last three years on projects related to protection of local Areas of Special Biological Significance (ASBS) and overlapping marine conservation areas at La Jolla Shores. Ms. Hanley was instrumental in developing the community outreach and education portion of the La Jolla Shores Coastal Watershed Management Plan, an ASBS Protection Model developed by San Diego Coastkeeper, Scripps Institution of Oceanography and the City of San Diego. In addition to her strong background in marine biology, she possesses expertise in public outreach and education, and commitment to increasing awareness of water quality and marine conservation issues within the community. Ms. Hanley has proven to be an effective coordinator and effective at considering and representing varying points of view while fostering productive relationships. She will bring a strong, positive energy to the RSG along with extensive knowledge of the San Diego Region.

**Ray Hiemstra, *Associate Director of Programs, Orange County Coastkeeper***

As the Associate Director of Programs for Orange County Coastkeeper, Mr. Hiemstra has been working to protect our coast for eight years. Through managing a variety of marine research projects in Newport Bay and Huntington Harbour and work on a restoration project on the Newport Coast, he has been directly involved in documenting marine resource conditions. Mr. Hiemstra's extensive localized knowledge of marine resources in Orange County is balanced with a regional perspective. Recognized as a go-to person in the environmental community in Orange County, he is a member of numerous stakeholder and technical advisory groups, where he is often the only environmental voice. As such, he has developed excellent communication and negotiation skills and has a record of developing innovative solutions to reach consensus with diverse stakeholders. Mr. Hiemstra is a facilitator for the Citizen Watershed Monitors of Orange County and is a regular participant in meetings of the Orange County Coastal Coalition and both the Newport Bay and Aliso Creek Watershed Stakeholder groups.

**Michael Sheehy, *Marine Conservation Coordinator, Santa Barbara Channelkeeper***

As the Marine Conservation Coordinator for Santa Barbara Channelkeeper, Mr. Sheehy educates the public on marine conservation efforts and issues relating to the Santa Barbara Channel. Mr. Sheehy brings extensive regional knowledge of the Santa Barbara Channel marine ecosystem and scientific expertise in marine ecology, specifically in areas of ecology critical to ecosystem-based management and the scientific basis for marine protected areas. He holds a master's degree in Marine Ecology from the University of California, Santa Barbara and has more than eight years of experience as a Research Associate with the Marine Science Institute and as a Project Manager with the research consortium, Partnership for Interdisciplinary Studies of Coastal Oceans, at UCSB. Mr. Sheehy has extensive experience in communicating marine science and conservation issues to the public and he has demonstrated success in cross-sector collaboration and relationship building through consulting work for non-profit and business interests. Mr. Sheehy serves on the Board of Lemnaya Oceanica, a non-profit organization dedicated to the protection of sharks and rays and their habitats through education and research primarily in Southern California and Mexico.

Additionally, CCKA supports the nomination of people who represent other constituencies, including national and regional conservation groups, divers, scientists, local businesses, and sport and commercial fishermen. In particular, we support the nomination of the following candidates (in alphabetical order):

**Sarah Abramson**, *Heal the Bay*

**Jenn Feinberg**, *Natural Resources Defense Council*

**Marcela Gutierrez**, *WiLDCOAST*

**Greg Helms**, *Ocean Conservancy*

We have found these people to be constructive and willing to listen as well as represent and involve multiple constituencies. We support their candidacies because they have a wealth of experience and expertise on these issues and we think they will make a valuable contribution to a collective process of fact finding and developing MPA network recommendations.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this important decision.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'AH', with a horizontal line extending to the right.

Angela Haren  
Program Director



July 18, 2008

Via email: [MLPAComments@resources.ca.gov](mailto:MLPAComments@resources.ca.gov)

**Re: Support for nominees to RSG**

Dear Ms. Miller-Henson:

The Natural Resources Defense Council would like to offer our support for a number of nominees to the Regional Stakeholder Group (RSG). NRDC is a non-profit conservation group with a long history of advocacy for healthy coast and ocean systems and sustainable fisheries. With over 230,000 California members and activists (1.2 million nationwide), we support an inclusive, transparent process for implementation of the Marine Life Protection Act.

The RSG is an integral part of this process. We applaud your goal of including members who can work collaboratively and communicate with and represent a broad array of interests. The composition should also reflect the fact that a large majority of southern Californians support creation of more marine protected areas, including marine reserves (Public Policy Institute of California, Edge Research).

Whether they come from the conservation community or the business world, each of the RSG candidates listed below brings to the process unique skills, firsthand knowledge of the region's coast and oceans, and rich communication networks as well as a commitment to collaboration and the ability to listen. We support their candidacies because we think they will make a valuable contribution to a collective process of fact finding and developing MPA network recommendations.

**Sarah Abramson**, *Coastal Resources Director for Heal the Bay*, has a Masters degree in Coastal Marine Resources Management from the Bren School of Environmental Science and Management. She has garnered local knowledge from SCUBA diving in the region and from her stint as a naturalist at Catalina Island Marine Institute. Her work helping local lobster trappers develop a collaborative monitoring program for spiny lobster at the Channel Islands Marine Protected Areas demonstrates her strong collaborative skills and her ability to apply her scientific knowledge to practical challenges.

**Kate Hanley**, *Director of Operations and Marine Conservation Director, San Diego Coastkeeper*, has a background in marine biology, local knowledge of the San Diego coast and ocean, a regional perspective and a can-do attitude. She has extensive communication networks and outstanding skills in areas of particular value for the MLPA process: in coordination and collaboration (e.g. her work to implement areas of special biological significance) and in community outreach and education (e.g. for the La Jolla Shores Coastal Watershed Management Plan).

**Michael Sheehy**, *Marine Conservation Coordinator, Santa Barbara Channelkeeper*, has extensive experience communicating marine science and conservation issues to the public and has demonstrated success in cross-sector collaboration and relationship building through his consulting for non-profit and business interests. Mr. Sheehy brings together extensive regional knowledge of the Santa Barbara Channel marine ecosystem and scientific expertise in marine ecology. He has a master's degree in Marine Ecology from UCSB and over eight years experience as a Research Associate and as a Project Manager with the Partnership for Interdisciplinary Studies of Coastal Oceans, at UCSB.

**Tom Ford**, *Executive Director, Santa Monica Baykeeper*. Mr. Ford's education and work experience spans the Atlantic and Pacific coasts and ranges from fishing to habitat restoration and education, giving him a broad perspective that can benefit the MLPA process. Educated as a biologist and marine ecologist at the University of Rhode Island and UCLA, he has worked as a commercial shell fisherman in Rhode Island, as a biological observer aboard dredges and shrimp boats, and as director of the Santa Monica Baykeeper Kelp Restoration Project. He also serves as a Vice Chair of the Santa Monica Bay Restoration Commission, and has an extensive network of contacts in the region.

**Marcela Gutierrez**, *WildCoast*, is a native of the Border Region and resident of the South San Diego Area. She has an undergraduate degree in Business Management, leadership expertise initiating and maintaining strategic business partnerships, and experience working for a seafood distributor. She is 100% bilingual in Spanish and will bring to the RSG strong problem solving skills and business and Latin communication networks

**Greg Helms**, *Ocean Conservancy*, has lived in the region for over two decades and has worked professionally on marine policy issues for fifteen years. Before OC, he served as community affairs director for Environmental Defense Center, a group that works closely with commercial fishing groups. In addition to following scientific studies of the region's ocean, he has a deep well of direct knowledge from sailing, surfing and SCUBA diving. He learned a great deal from participation in the Channel Islands MPA designation process and the ongoing monitoring program for that network.

We have not attempted to be comprehensive, but rather to focus on a few individuals with whom we have direct experience, and who will bring diverse and valuable skills to the RSG process. We appreciate the opportunity to offer our views to the selection process.

Sincerely,

Karen Garrison

Co-Director, NRDC Ocean Program